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Mandatory Review
Case # NLI 76-2013
Document # 6a

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15 September 1965

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The September 15th Statement on the Dominican Republic by the Honorable J. William Fulbright

1. In a lengthy statement released on 15 September Senator J. William Fulbright developed primarily two major themes concerning the role of the US in the Dominican rebellion: a. The US intervened for the purpose of the preventing victory by a revolutionary force judged to be communist dominated. He said that "There is no doubt that the threat of communism rather than danger to American lives was his (Ambassador Bennett's) primary or sole reason for recommending military action. b. At no time did the communists control the rebellion prior to the landing of US Marines. Their participation was to have been expected. We analyze below these two themes and include as annexes comments on subsidiary points made by the Senator.

2. Our analysis of the first theme shows that by April 28 Santo Domingo was in a state of anarchy. It is true that officials of the Embassy in Santo Domingo as well as government officials in Washington were concerned with growing Communist influence in the Dominican Republic and the almost immediate role that some communist activists took as early as the second day of the revolt. However, the trigger which sent US troops ashore was the mortal threat to the lives of Americans and many other nationals in a city where law and order had collapsed. Unruly groups had entered the Hotel Embajador on two occasions, once in search of an American citizen, and had fired indiscriminately into rooms and corridors. The premises of several embassies were invaded, and the British vice consul reported to the US ambassador on the afternoon of 28 April that the downtown situation was "horrible" and that mobs of 200-300 were sacking homes in the residential area of Arroyo Hondo where many Americans lived.

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3. The collapse of the local police forces was almost complete by April 28. Police Chief Despradel told the American Public Safety Adviser on that day that his men were not trained to fight against the heavy weapons being used by the rebels. Some police were in hiding, some were hiding their uniforms and mixing with the mobs, some were already the victims of atrocities.

4. By the late afternoon of April 28 as Ambassador Bennett talked to Washington shots could be heard against the Embassy building. It was in this context of anarchy that the junta leader Colonel Benoit informed the US ambassador that he could no longer guarantee the safety of foreign nationals. The following day the Papal Muncio, who had been most active in trying to convince both sides to lay down their arms, described the marines as "performing a humanitarian purpose in protecting lives."

5. Senator Fulbright's second theme develops the point that at no time did the communists control the rebellion prior to the landing of US marines. Our view is that taken by itself this statement is correct. The point is, however, that by the evening of April 27 the moderate PRD leaders of the rebellion, hitherto in shaky control of the movement, lost their nerve and began abandoning their posts. The Molina Urena government fell and many of its principal figures went into asylum. One of the most prominent of these, Jose Pena Gomez admitted that the communists who joined the rebel force had infiltrated into positions of importance and that it was very difficult to stop them. For his part, Molina Urena is reported to have said on May 3 that he wanted to get the truth of communist infiltration of the rebellion across to the world, but that he could not face further jeopardizing his own and his family's safety by doing so. (See Tab B, Memorandum, "The Communist Role in the Dominican Revolt", 7 May 1965.)

6. There was then no one in effective leadership. It is perhaps significant that the French ambassador in Santo Domingo described events there "as following the classic communist pattern." He concluded that his British,

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Italian and West German colleagues were in agreement that the "Caamano group", which grew out of the rebellion, was directed "at its base" by communists.

7. In essence, then, on the evening of the Marines' landing the first task facing the US was protecting the lives of Americans and other foreign nationals. Its second task was more complex. The US was faced with making the agonizing determination of whether increasingly evident communist participation and influence within the rebellion would--in the absence of other leadership--soon become complete control. All available evidence pointed toward this eventuality.

Attachments

- Tab A: The Situation in Santo Domingo on 28 April
- Tab B: The Communist Role in the Dominican Revolt, 7 May 1965
- Tab C: The Communist Role in the Dominican Rebel Movement, 16-27 May
- Tab D: Communist Connections of Juan Bosch: A Fresh Interpretation
- Tab E: Statements from the Fulbright Speech and Facts

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Document #2

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

• ROUTINE

Intelligence Information Cable

COUNTRY CUBA/VENEZUELA/URUGUAY

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

DATE OF 8 MAY 1965
INFO.

DISTR. 11 MAY 1965

SUBJECT

COMMENTS
ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
AND ITS RELATION TO CUBA

PLACE & DATE ACQ. REF IN -63789

SOURCE AND APPRAISAL: FIELD REPORT NO. 1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

1. ON 8 MAY 1965 1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

A. UNITED STATES SHIPS ARE PATROLLING CUBAN KEYS AND COASTS.

B. IN CUBA SPECIAL WEAPONS, INCLUDING MISSILE INSTALLATIONS ARE READY AND PREPARED AGAINST A POSSIBLE ATTACK.

C. THE INTEGRATION OF MULTILATERAL FORCES IN SANTO DOMINGO IS VERY DANGEROUS FOR CUBA BECAUSE AN ATTACK AGAINST CUBA COULD RESULT WITHOUT THE UNITED STATES ASSUMING SOLE RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT.

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1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

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CIA/NMCC EXD

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1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

D. AT NO TIME, EXCEPT DURING THE OCTOBER 1962 MISSILE CRISIS, HAS THE UNITED STATES HAD A MORE PROPITIOUS AND JUSTIFIED OCCASION TO ATTACK CUBA.

E. IF UNITED STATES TROOPS ARE WITHDRAWN FROM THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC A SIMILAR SITUATION (REVOLT) WILL BE REPEATED IN VENEZUELA.

F. IN ANY EVENT, REBELLIONS WILL TAKE PLACE IN OTHER COUNTRIES. [REDACTED]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

[REDACTED] COMMENT:
THERE HAVE BEEN UNSUBSTANTIATED REPORTS OF AN IMMINENT CASTRO-COMMUNIST COUP TO TAKE PLACE IN URUGUAY [REDACTED]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

[REDACTED] HOWEVER, NEITHER THE URUGUAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCU) NOR ANY OTHER LEFTIST SUBVERSIVE ORGANIZATION APPEARS PREPARED TO STAGE A COUP IN URUGUAY. THE PCU HAS ORGANIZED PARAMILITARY UNITS TO TAKE TO THE STREETS TO STIMULATE THE PEOPLE TO STAGE A COUNTERREVOLUTION IN THE EVENT THAT MILITARY PLOTTERS TRY TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT [REDACTED]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

2. [REDACTED] DISSEM: COMKWESTFOR, CINCLANT, CINCSO. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

END OF MESSAGE

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3.4(b)(1)~~SECRET~~CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
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COUNTRY CUBA/ DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Mandatory Review

Case # NLJ 96-288

Document # 4

DISTR: 9 MAY 1965

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

DATE OF INFO. 8 MAY 1965

SUBJECT

1. ALLEGED DIRECTION OF REBEL OPERATIONS IN SANTO DOMINGO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC BY "CHE" GUEVARA
2. REPORTED ARRIVAL OF MISSILES AND ARMS IN CUBA
3. REPORTED CONFIDENTIAL ORDERS ISSUED IN CUBA

PLACE &
DATE ACQ.

REF

IN 62705

SOURCE
AND
APPRAISAL:

FIELD REPORT NO.

1.5(c)

3.4(b)(1)

1. AS OF 8 MAY 1965, MAJOR ERNESTO "CHE" GUEVARA Y SERNA, CUBAN MINISTER OF INDUSTRIES, WAS DIRECTING REBEL OPERATIONS IN SANTO DOMINGO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. [REDACTED] COMMENT: CONJECTURE OVER GUEVARA'S WHEREABOUTS HAS BEEN DISCUSSED BY CUBAN EXILES AND MANY RUMORS HAVE EVOLVED AS A RESULT OF GUEVARA'S ABSENCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT SCENE FOLLOWING HIS RETURN TO CUBA ON 14 MARCH. PRESS COVERAGE OF THIS SPECULATION WAS CITED IN THE RECENT NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE BY PAUL HOFFMAN, 4 MAY. PREMIER CASTRO HAS COMMENTED ON QUERIES CONCERNING "CHE'S" ABSENCE THAT IT CAN BE

1.5(c)

3.4(b)(1)

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3.4(b)(1)

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ASSUMED THAT GUEVARA'S TALENTS WILL BE PUT TO USE WHERE MOST
NEEDED.)

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

2. SOVIET VESSELS CARRYING MACHINERY TO CUBA HAVE TRANSPORTED
MISSILES AND WEAPONS IN CRATES WHICH WERE OBSERVED BEING
UNLOADED. [REDACTED] THE UNITED

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

STATES WAS UNAWARE OF WHAT EQUIPMENT THE CUBAN ARMY AGAIN HAS.)

[REDACTED] COMMENT: THE SOVIET VESSEL KASPIYSK EN ROUTE TO CUBA ON 5 MAY
REPORTEDLY CHANGED COURSE TO UNLOAD SUSPECTED ARMS SHIPMENTS IN
MARIEL BEFORE PROCEEDING TO HABANA, [REDACTED]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

3. ON 6 MAY OFFICIAL CONFIDENTIAL ORDERS WERE ISSUED THAT
CUBA WAS IN A STATE OF WAR.

4. [REDACTED] DISSEM: CINCLANT, CINCSO, COMKWESTFOR [REDACTED]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

5. [REDACTED] COMMENT: NO DOUBT THE ABOVE INFORMATION SHOULD BE VIEWED
WITH SOME SKEPTICISM.)

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3.4(b)(1)

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Mandatory Review

Case # NLJ 96-283

Document # 6a-1

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6a-1

16 July 1965

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Situation in Santo Domingo on 28 April

1. Santo Domingo on 28 April 1965 was in a state of almost complete anarchy. The rebel government of Molina Urena had collapsed on the previous afternoon and the Communists and their extremist allies were attempting to fill the vacuum. The loyalist military leaders were unable or unwilling to commit their superior force against the rebel stronghold downtown. The police were impotent and their few efforts to restore order ended in disaster. Meanwhile, armed gangs and individual hoodlums were terrorizing the city, even the residential areas. The UN Embassy was under fire and American citizens were in grave danger.

2. The British vice consul who toured the downtown area of Santo Domingo on the afternoon informed Ambassador Bennett that the situation there was "horrible." He said there were armed bands running all about. The Britisher said he had taken a man who had been shot in the leg to the hospital and there he had found wounded lying all about on the floors. He added that British residents of the Arroyo Hondo suburb of Santo Domingo reported that an armed band of two to three hundred persons were looting and sacking residential houses in the area.

3. Indicative of the state of anarchy in the city that day was the problem faced by loyalist Police Chief Despradel. He told the American public safety adviser on that day that his riot control forces were almost completely inactive. They had not been trained to fight against the heavy weapons the rebels had been using against them. The police chief said that almost every patrol he had sent out in downtown Santo Domingo had been wiped out. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the police were taking off their uniforms and attempting to hide, but were nevertheless being tracked down by the mobs and killed. In the afternoon of the same day, the police chief made an attempt to use a tank to help control the mobs, but this ended in disaster when the tank was exploded by rebel bazooka fire and all occupants were killed.

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

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4. The Police Post at the Palace of Justice in downtown Santo Domingo was overrun by Communist-led rebels at about 10:00 am EDT on the 28th and the rebels obtained more arms and police uniforms. The American Embassy [REDACTED] during most of the day had little first-hand information as to what was going on in the downtown areas, but did receive numerous reports of killings. Sporadic sniping was underway in the residential areas where most of the American colony lived. Also, there was growing nervousness in the diplomatic corps since the promises of more than one embassy were invaded by armed mobs. These included the embassies of Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, Ecuador, and El Salvador. The mobs were under no control during much of the day and looting and sacking took place in many parts of the city. Some of the mob actions, however, were inspired by the rebel-controlled radio station. Radio broadcasters gave the addresses of homes of air force officers and other military officers who were on the loyalist side and incited the mobs to sack the houses. The wives and children of loyalist officers were seized and taken to the Duarte Bridge and other targets of loyalist military action.

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

5. There were a number of reports reaching the embassy on the 28th of rebel atrocities. Although these have not been confirmed in detail they undoubtedly reflect an accurate general picture. A USIS staff member reported on 28 April, for instance, that twelve policemen or soldiers had been seen being summarily shot. The victims had been marched along the street, with the mobs crying "pardon." Then they were lined up against a wall and executed. The respected Colonel Calderon, who served under Juan Bosch as chief of the presidential guard, also met his death under these circumstances.

6. [REDACTED] on 28 April 13 policemen who had been guarding the house [REDACTED] were overwhelmed by rebels and their bodies dismembered and slogans written on walls with blood. There were several witnesses to this event.

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

7. Late on 28 April, Colonel Benoit, an air force officer on the loyalist military junta then in power, informed

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the American Ambassador that, in regard to his earlier request for US military assistance, he now wishes to add that American lives were endangered and that "conditions are of such disorder that it is impossible to provide adequate protection." He then formally asked for US intervention to restore public order.

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Case # NLJ 10-2-83

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Intelligence Information Cable

ROUTINE 1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

COUNTRY CUBA DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

DATE OF INFO. 26 APRIL 1965

DISTR. 1 MAY 1965

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

SUBJECT

1. ARREST OF MILITARY PERSONNEL IN CONSOLACION DEL SUR
2. REPORTED WILLINGNESS OF REBEL ARMY OFFICERS TO HELP IN SANTO DOMINGO

PLACE & DATE ACQ.

REF

IN 57073

SOURCE AND APPRAISAL:

FIELD REPORT NO.

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

1. DURING THE NIGHT OF 26 APRIL 1965, A NUMBER OF MILITARY PERSONNEL IN CONSOLACION DEL SUR, PINAR DEL RIO PROVINCE, WERE ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH THEFT. ONE OF THE MEN, DR. CEBALLO (FNLI), WAS ACCUSED OF GIVING INFORMATION TO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. THE DOCTOR'S LICENSE WAS REVOKED, BUT HE LATER WAS RELEASED WHEN THE CHARGES COULD NOT BE PROVED. THE OTHER MILITARY PERSONNEL WERE SENTENCED, BUT THEIR SENTENCES WERE COMMUTED WHEN THEY AGREED TO FIGHT WHEREVER NEEDED.

(SIC)
2. UNIDENTIFIED REBEL/ARMY OFFICERS WERE

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

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██████████ WILLING ██████████ TO GIVE HELP TO SANTO DOMINGO, IF ASKED.

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

3. ██████████ DISSEM: COMKWESTFOR, CINCSO, ██████████

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Document 103

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STATEMENT - FACT

Statement 1. Senator Fulbright has said that it is "entirely possible, if not likely, that if the military is allowed to retain its power it will overthrow any future government that displeases it" and at the same time said that the military "must be substantially reduced in size and some of the more irresponsible generals pensioned off or sent on lengthy diplomatic holidays abroad".

Fact: Military reform was one of the major objectives of the Reid government and Hector Garcia Godoy has consistently stated that he feels military reforms must be initiated under his regime. The US country team has recommended that we press Garcia Godoy "energetically to initiate feasible reductions and reforms". Garcia Godoy has already taken the major step of removing General Wessin from command because of insubordination, thus asserting civilian supremacy over the military. The Reid regime took some very important steps to eliminate corruption in the military and General Imbert exiled eight top ranking officers who were among the most venal. Garcia Godoy has endorsed this latter action and has prohibited the reentry of these officers into the Dominican Republic.

At the same time both Garcia Godoy and the US country team are conscious of the fact that military reform should not be pushed too rapidly for two major reasons. First the hasty cutbacks in military strength would severely shake the Armed Forces confidence in the new regime. In this connection it should be noted that the Dominican military leadership is showing an awareness of the need for change and is reportedly working on plans for reform. Second, the new regime needs a competent military force that will be prepared to combat the expected insurgent activities of the extremists who have used the revolution to equip and train themselves for guerrilla warfare. For these reasons the country team has recommended a gradual cutback in the military to about 60% of their pre-crisis strength.

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Statement 2. Senator Fulbright said the US acted "unilaterally -- and illegally" and the OAS acted "after the fact". Senator Fulbright further said that intervention should not have been undertaken "without the advance consent of our Latin American allies."

Fact: The dangerous situation developed in the Dominican Republic so quickly that there was little time to obtain the support of Latin nations before taking action. On 28 April it rapidly became clear that the lives and property of US and other foreign nationals in the Dominican Republic were in danger. The incident on the morning of 27 April at the Hotel Embajador demonstrated that US lives could have been lost at any moment. That none were is only a tribute to the speed with which US Marines could reach the embattled US citizens. It has frequently been noted by students of the OAS that one of the organization's major liabilities is the slow pace with which it works. Ambassadors must be convened; receive an initial request for action; consult their governments, deliver long speeches outlining the positions of their home countries, and then finally act. It is highly improbable, given this scenario, that the OAS would have been able to act on 28 April. President Johnson did, in fact, manage to consult with most Latin American Ambassadors that night and explain why we felt it necessary to take action so quickly. It should be noted, in this context, that all major steps taken since then have been done as OAS actions. This includes the establishment of the Inter-American Peace Force, the extension of economic aid to pay the salaries of public employees during the revolution, and the long, arduous negotiations that recently culminated in the installation of the Hector Garcia Godoy government.

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Statement 3. Senator Fulbright said that "the danger to American lives was more a pretext than a reason for the massive United States intervention that began on the evening of April 28 . . . In fact, no American lives were lost in Santo Domingo until the marines began exchanging fire with the rebels after the 28th; reports of the widespread shooting that endangered American lives turned out to be greatly exaggerated".

FACT

See Tab A

Statement 4. Senator Fulbright said: "US intervention has alienated our real friends in Latin America." "It is not possible at present to assess the depth and extent of disillusion with the US on the part of democrats and reformers in Latin America. I myself think that it is deep and widespread. "Intervention reflects a grievous misreading of the temper of contemporary Latin American politics."

Fact. In February 1964, [REDACTED]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

Betancourt said that Bosch deserved to be overthrown because he was trying to play ball with the Communists and, in turn, was being undermined by them. Betancourt characterized Bosch as an irresponsible president who had set back the democratic process in the Dominican Republic for years to come.

Comment by US political scientist Robert Alexander, who has long been a friend of liberal parties in Latin America, described Bosch's attitude in mid-1964 as so negative and violent that his return to power in the Dominican Republic would be a "disaster."

In a conversation on 2 May 1965 between Romulo Betancourt, Arturo Morales Carrion, and Arthur Schlesinger, Betancourt said the following: "He (Bosch) is the best short story writer and the worst politician in Latin America, and he should spend the rest of his life writing short stories." Betancourt, according to Schlesinger, regards it as essential to prevent Bosch's return, and believes that Figueres (former President of Costa Rica) can persuade him to retire from politics.

Statement 5. Senator Fulbright accused the administration of confusing Communist support of a political movement and Communist control. According to the Senator, "Intervention on the basis of Communist participation as distinguished from control of the Dominican revolution was a mistake of panic and timidity which reflects a grievous misreading of ... Latin American politics."

Fact. It is interesting to note the opinion of Communist influence in the rebellion formed by a [REDACTED] diplomat who opposes US intervention on moral and legal grounds. [REDACTED] was sent by his government to Santo Domingo on an official investigating tour in mid-June reported that "Communist influence in Dominican developments had been enormous and continues to be". [REDACTED] described rebel leader Caamano as a useful stooge of the Communist, but did not say whether Caamano was a Communist. He also said that Fidel Castro had been expected to arrive in Santo Domingo in May 1965.

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3.4(b)(1)(c)

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Statement 6. Senator Fulbright, in criticizing the US actions in the Dominican Republic, declared that the US must recognize that most of the popular support in Chile is for a group of "rambunctious, leftist Christian Democrats." We charged that the US does not truly understand social revolution because of its "comfortable and rich conservative" status.

Fact: The US Government has since the very beginning warmly supported the election of Eduardo Frei, Christian Democrat leader, to the presidency and the subsequent election of a majority of the Christian Democrats in the Chamber of Deputies. The Senator is correct, and indeed merely echoes an official position that Chile is an example of an advanced democracy as expressed by Ambassador Stevenson at the United Nations last November. Secretary Rusk told Chile's Ambassador Tomic on 6 August 1965 that he wanted the Ambassador to know that the US is in full sympathy with the program of Chile for social and economic development. The Secretary added that "there is no ideological argument between Chile and the United States."

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